



# Ronald Eugene Pesch

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023



Scan to Visit

# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Events</b> .....	Page 7
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 8
<b>Media</b> .....	Page 12



# Ronald Eugene Pesch

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

**R**ONALD EUGENE PESCH  
Born: August 16, 1937

Died: June 10, 2023

Ronald Eugene Pesch was born in Stevens Point, Wisconsin on August 16, 1937. Fittingly, it was a Monday – a day of work. His mom, Marie, was one of three children born to Henry and Mary Pesch. Our Dad never knew his father. (But thanks to DNA testing, he may have finally found a strong candidate).

Dad was raised by his grandparents – hard-working, blue-collar folks. By all accounts, it was a modest childhood. Marie’s brother, Dad’s Uncle Pete, and his bride, Estelle, lived across the street. Older Aunts and Uncles from both near and far popped in and out of Point. It was a place he loved. As kids, the great majority of our family vacations were comprised of visiting relatives in Milwaukee, then heading north to Point - the ‘City of Wonderful Water’ – located in Central Wisconsin, 100 miles directly west of Green Bay. (Dad’s souvenir from one of those trips was an in-need-of-restoration 1937 Ford).

The story, if we have it correctly, is that our Great Grandma Mary was born in the house she and her husband, Henry, shared on Shaurette Street. The house was next to railroad tracks, owned by the Soo Line.

Marie had married Tom VandenBosch, and when Dad was somewhere around age 14 or 15, he joined the family in Michigan, first in Battle Creek, and later in Muskegon, where they lived in the Forest Homes development, located east of Harvey and south of Marquette.

By 18 or so, Dad had joined the Air Force, ultimately landing at Kinross, near “Sault Sainte Siberia” and Goose Bay Labrador. There, he “nearly froze to death” with many others, making friends and battling with those in charge.



## Obituary

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

---

Upon release, he returned to Muskegon. Marie's other brother, Forest – known as 'Forrie' by most – ran a parking garage, and later a gas station, then finally a service station, all located on the city's Western Avenue. Dad would work with his Uncle, in various capacities, across the coming years.

Dad's resume of making ends meet included a stint living in Chicago, working initially as a courier making medical deliveries, (a job he quit when a visit to one facility included delivery of a package down a series of dark, door-filled hallways to a dead-ringer for Boris Karloff), a line job at Curtiss Candy Company, (after which he vowed to never eat another one of their candy bars), running a gas station on Ottawa Street in Muskegon, and a job running a second-hand furniture store (which, the story goes, handled the sale of a love seat that was originally owned by Muskegon's famed Hackley family).

In 1961, Dad married our Mom, Elsa Marie Koski. Together, they would create a family of five.

His job from his earliest years of marriage involved traveling to Milwaukee for the week to work for Wisconsin Motors, a subsidiary of Continental Motors, staying with relatives, then traveling back to Muskegon on weekends. (That's the job where he had to retrieve and machine 105-pound castings. Dad was strong as an ox.)

Ultimately, he landed a position with Continental "on the hill" back in Muskegon. While there, he earned certifications from Michigan State University's School of Labor and Industrial Relations between 1966 and 1968. (Those classes seemed to have spurred a strong interest in politics.)

As many will recall, working for Continental in the 1960s was a precarious job to hold in Muskegon's boom-and-bust economy, and eventually, he was among some wave of cuts. That news, as I remember, arrived via CB radio somewhere along US 31, just as we were headed out of town, headed toward Wisconsin. Our parents' debate on what to do was short and we continued down the road. Dad would work to find a new job when our vacation was over.

He reinvented himself as a railroad engineer. Mom was a stay-at-home, stretch-the-dollar, volunteer-where-needed Mom. She would eventually take those skills to the workplace, employed by Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Program as a nutrition aid in later years. (There she traveled around town assisting young families learn those skills.)



## Obituary

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

The railroad job, as those who have done that work can attest, might be first shift one week, third the next, followed by second shift the following week. Home-base might be Muskegon, Holland, Grand Rapids, or elsewhere, depending on the seniority board. “Bumps” as they are called, meant someone with more seniority was taking your job, and you then needed to “bump” somebody with less seniority out of their job. The ultimate starting-and-stopping points for the train you were running might be anywhere along the Chesapeake and Ohio – later the Chessie System line – in Lower Peninsula Michigan, or along the path to and into Chicago. Trains ran seven days a week. Pay fluctuated based on the job you held.

As kids, we could sometimes watch Dad at work, as, occasionally, the job he was on ran along the C & O tracks that ran next to our house in Muskegon. Because of his work, especially when we were younger, Mom would have to remind us to play quietly. At any hour of the day, Dad might be sleeping, in preparation for whatever train he was working.

With five kids, there were side hustles, as they call them now. “Ron’s Antenna and CB Sales” included the sale and installation of CB radios and gear, car stereos, and occasionally, the building and placement of television antenna towers in the days before cable TV. One short-lived venture involved the sale of single-serving pizzas and pizza ovens to bars and restaurants. Dad ran for political office on more than one occasion. Life was always interesting at our house.

There wasn’t a ton of disappointment when Dad was taken out of service by the railroad because of hearing loss. The cab of a 100-to-200-ton diesel locomotive, with a warning whistle and compressed air braking, is an extremely loud and stressful place to go to work each day. Depending on the speed, stopping a train can require more than a mile of distance. A financial settlement was reached, and, as he always said, the move gave him his life back.

Still in his 50s, he had more time to tinker and enjoy life. With a brother-in-law, he began to acquire and reassemble salvaged vehicles, repairing the wrecks, having them re-certified and placing them back on the road. He frequented auctions, yard, and estate sales with Elsa, and in later years, friends. Cameras, watches, BB guns, tools, lawn mowers, snow blowers, a house - and all its contents – and, well, pretty much anything else that caught his fancy would be bought and sometimes flipped. Dad had nothing against retailers. Simply put, clearance racks, scratch-and-dent, approaching expiration dates, and items-in-need-of-fixing – were his favorite departments. He simply loved a good deal.



## Obituary

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

---

When Elsa became ill and needed to enter a home, he visited her daily. They were married for 54 years prior to her passing in 2015.

Always on the go, he started his days at local restaurants, meeting the guys for coffee. From there, the day was an adventure, popping in for visits with friends and family. In his eyes, a knock on the door was better than a phone call.

He never met a dog that didn't like him. Of course, that might have been related to the fact that Dad always carried a seemingly endless supply of dog treats wherever he went.

Ron exited this world on Saturday, June 10, 2023, in Muskegon, with a pair of replaced shoulders, a new hip, a Watchman device for the heart, and a pair of bad knees. He was still tinkering until the end.

Thanks to his life with Elsa, he had a hand in the arrival of seven grandchildren: Camry, Cayla (Kyle), Leigha, Jamie, Evan, Josh, and Sean, as well as twin great-grandsons, Liam and Owen.

Ron is survived by his children: the first round included Ronald Dean Pesch, Laura (Greg) Juhnke, and Terri (Steve) Slater. Then, to the delight of all, came Kurt (Liz) Pesch, and Pete Pesch. All reside in Michigan. He is also survived by a brother, Ronald Ziwisky of Wisconsin; half-sisters, Wanda Grieve of Maryland, and Lorraine Wise of California, and sisters-in-law, Bette Westgate, Peggy Koski, and Sylvia Koski, all of Michigan, Abi (Tom) Hudson of Florida, and Maija (Jon) Hayes of Alaska.

In addition to his wife, Elsa, Ron was preceded in death by his mother, Marie VandenBosch-Green, in-laws Arne and Lucy Koski, and brothers-in-law, Karl Koski, A.J. Koski, and Jim Westgate. A MEMORIAL OPEN HOUSE will be held from 4-6 p.m. on Friday, June 23, 2023, at The Lee Chapel of Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services, 6291 Harvey St., Norton Shores, MI 49444. Cake and Dad's favorite beverage, coffee, will be served. MEMORIALS in memory of Ron may be directed to the Stevens Point Youth Baseball Association's 'Ma' Pesch Fund or Noah Project. You may sign his online guestbook at [www.sytsemafh.com](http://www.sytsemafh.com)




## Events


**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

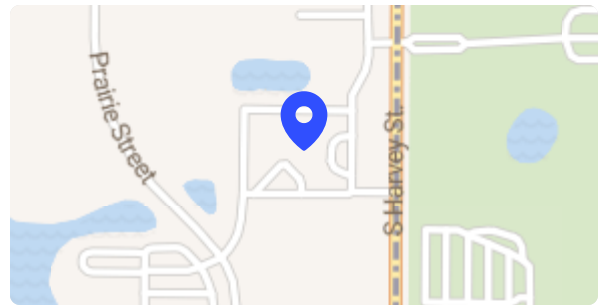
AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

### Memorial Open House

 **Friday**, June 23, 2023

 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM ET

 **The Lee Chapel - Family Center**  
6291 S. Harvey St., Norton Shores MI 49444





## Tribute Wall

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

DR

**Dwight L Reames** posted:

WE did not know of Rons passing.This was a great shock and a great loss to anyone who knew Ron.Ron and Elsa would stop at our house for coffee and visit.We would stop by Ron and Elsa s for coffee and Elsas great bake goods treats.Ron and I worked gun shows in Grand Rapids, White Cloud and where ever Ron thought there was good deals.B-B gun shows with Ron was where I got educated on B-B guns.We are sorry we missed the service as we did not know .Our sympathy and hearts are with the family. Sincerely The Reames family Dwight, Judy and Zoey.

September 2 at 3:49 PM

SA

**Sara Ackerman** sent a virtual gift in honor of Ronald.

I'm sorry to just now hearing about your father's passing. I'm not on Facebook anymore, so that's why I'm late in giving my condolences. Prayers to you, Ron, and all of your beloved family.Sara Ackerman



August 20 at 9:12 AM



## Tribute Wall

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023

OD

**Osmer Deming** posted:

To the Ron Pesch family: My mother just sent me a text message, telling me about your father's passing. Sorry we missed the memorial service. But I would be remiss if I didn't leave some type of tribute to him on behalf of myself and family. You all know that your father and my father were friends. In fact, I don't know that my father had any friend that was truly closer to him than Ron Pesch. Our fathers had similar political views and I learned a lot growing up, listening to them discuss and argue politics in our living room. He was very articulate, outspoken, and very passionate in his beliefs. As a boy, I looked up to him and my whole family loved him. After I graduated from college in the 1990s and moved back to Muskegon, "Mr. Pesch" (as we called him) became more of my friend. He and Elsa would love to go yardsaling on Friday morning and I would often go with him when she couldn't or didn't want to go. Mr. Pesch and I, unfortunately, accumulated way too much junk from these yard sales, but we enjoyed every minute of it--and I still have some of the bargain finds from those days. I have so many memories from these days. I can still hear him saying "I collect bb guns. Do you have any that you would like to sell?" During this timeframe and into the 2000s, I also remember that Mr. Pesch had a routine of going out to coffee most mornings at either Carmen's or the cafe on Hackley and Barclay with my father, with Chad Larnard, with Gary Pease, and with a lot of other contemporaries. I was way outside of their peer group, but I was lucky enough that my dad brought me a couple of times. They were an interesting group of old men who all valued each other's friendships and could start the morning with a good laugh. He and Gary were very kind and supportive of our family after my father passed away in 2007. We did not have frequent contact after that, but my mother, sister, and I would always talk about Mr. Pesch and how he was doing and how we should try to get a visit going. We all wish we had made more of an effort to have made that happen. But his memory and friendship is something that will stay with us forever. Osmer Deming

June 15 at 4:49 AM

RP

**Ron Pesch** July 17 at 4:26 PM

Thanks Osmer! My dad cherished that friendship with your father and family! Glad to hear you, like I, received some proper coffee guy training! We are currently knee-deep in the collection, sorting away. Standing in his garage one day, I posed a question? "Dad," I asked, "How many gas cans must a man own before he can call himself a man?" At that time, I could count 12, in all shapes and sizes scattered about the confines. "I never paid more than a buck for any of them...well, I might have paid two for that big one in the corner..." he laughed. The total has grown to at least 17...



# Tribute Wall

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023



**Paula Gonzalez** posted:

I did not know this gentleman, Mr. Pesch, but your tribute to your father made me laugh and cry. He sounded like a handful and delightful person and sounds like your family had a beautiful and adventurous life with him. May peace and wonderful memories be with you forever.

June 18 at 2:25 PM



**Ron Pesch** shared 8 photos to the **Ron** album.



June 15 at 4:49 AM



**Jane Hoffman** posted:

Ron was a good friend of my husband, Wayne Hoffman, who passed away last December. They would get together at Carmen's, Tootsies and other breakfast places. Ron will surely be missed by the coffee group. Prayers go out to the family. Jane Hoffman

June 15 at 10:46 AM



**Shattuck & Lisa Braafhart** posted:

We are so sorry to hear Ron's passing. He was always such a nice gentleman when we ran into him at Cayla & Kyle's wedding and at the twins birthday parties. We send all of you our deepest sympathy and are holding all of you close to our hearts. With love from Shattuck & Lisa Braafhart & family

June 15 at 10:42 AM

**AH** **Abi Koski Hudson** June 16 at 11:13 AM

It was a shock to hear of Ron passing as he looked as healthy as ever last June, and I thought I had just had a nice chat with him (it was actually 3-29). Love to all who knew him well from Abi & Tom



# Tribute Wall

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023



**Sharon Kieft** lit a candle in honor of Ronald.

Sending prayers & peace to the Pesch Family. We have many fond memories of your Mom & Dad from Immanuel. May the special memories help you get through this difficult time. Hugs, Carol Priest Sharon (Priest) Kieft ❤️



June 15 at 7:47 AM

**RP Ron Pesch** June 16 at 6:38 PM  
Thank you!



**Bernadette Miller** sent a virtual gift in honor of Ronald.

Ron, Jamie & Evan We are so sorry for your Loss, it's hard to lose your parents. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Ron & Bernadette Miller Friends from years ago



June 15 at 4:49 AM

**RP Ron Pesch** June 23 at 5:05 AM  
Bernadette, Bernadette Thank you so much for the kind note. I do hope you and Ron - a lovely choice for a name - are doing well! It has been a long time!! trust that little Mazda is still treating you well! LOL! Where are two hiding out these days? All my best! Ron

**SK Sylvia Koski** June 15 at 11:54 AM  
So sorry about your Dad's death. It took many years to figure him out, As a new member of the family I could never quite tell when he was serious and when he was not. Love to you and the rest of your family,

**JD Judi Delis** June 15 at 6:09 AM  
Ron will be missed by many! He was a kind man. Sad for his families loss. RIP.



## Media

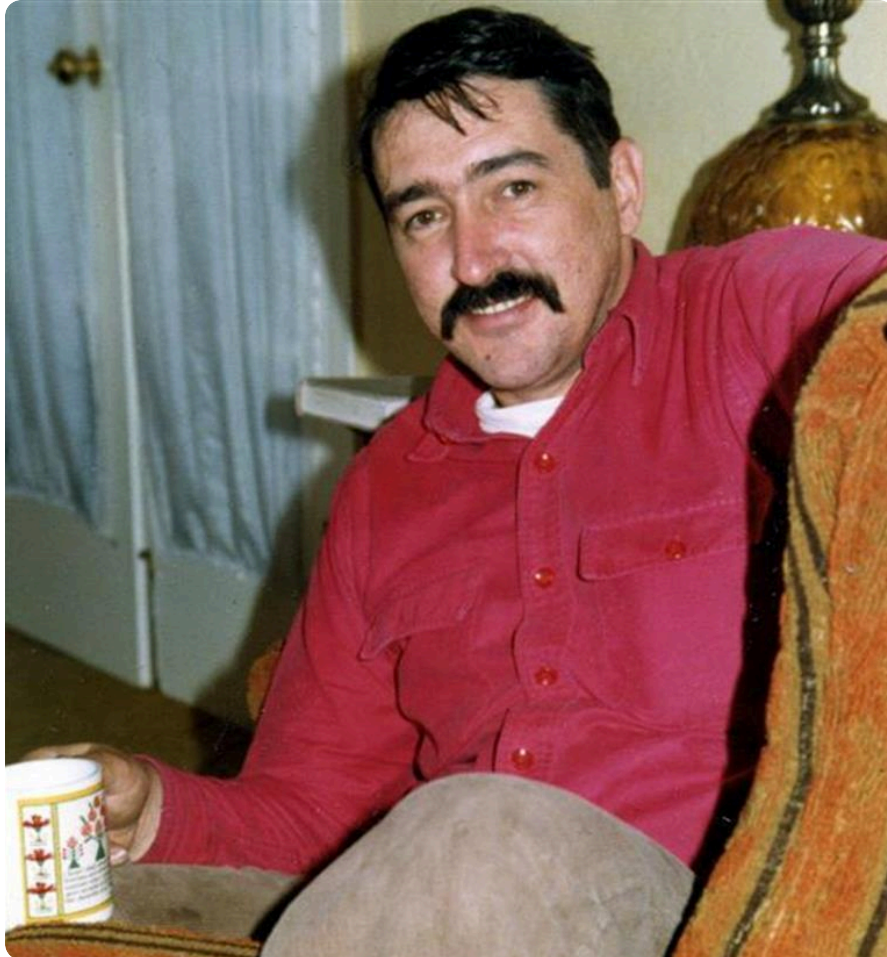
**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023



**Ron Pesch** shared 8 photos to the **Ron** album.

June 15 at 6:52 PM



**Bernadette Miller** June 20 at 6:57 PM

You resemble your Dad when he was young



## Media

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023



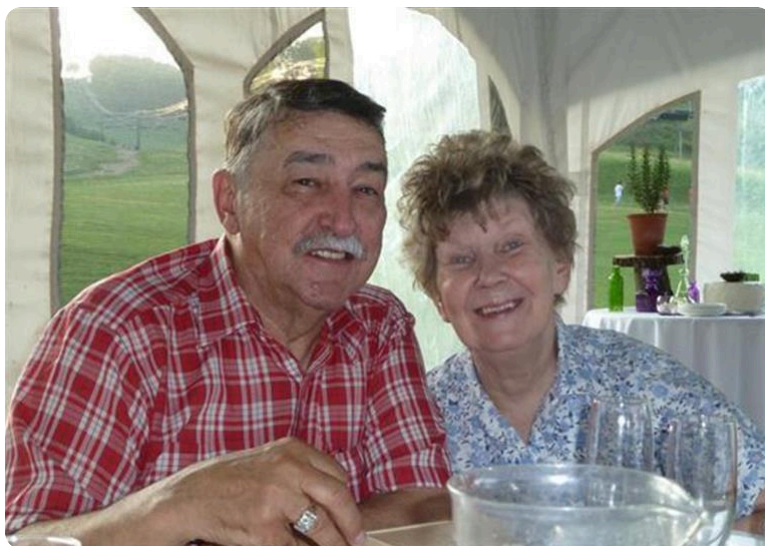
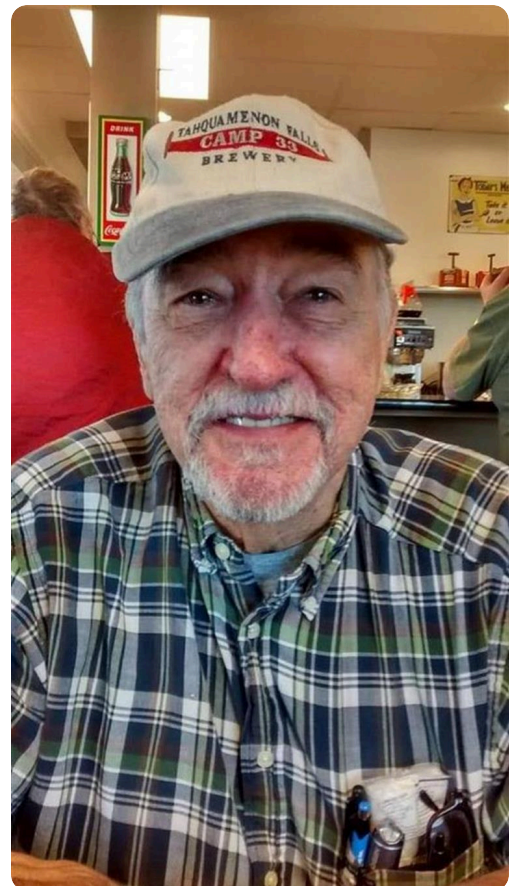
Ron and Elsa



**Media**

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023



Ron and Elsa



Ron and Elsa



# Media

**Ronald Eugene Pesch**

AUG 16, 1937 - JUN 10, 2023





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Ronald by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



**Scan to Visit**